

# The Progressive Farmer

AND THE COTTON PLANT.  
(Consolidated September 27, 1904.)

Entered at Raleigh, N. C., as second class mail matter.

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## CURRENT EVENTS: THE TREND OF THINGS AS WE SEE IT.

The world has been most interested these last seven days in watching the movements of four men meeting together daily in the navy yard at Portsmouth, N. H.—big-bodied, big-brained Baron de Witte, with Baron de Rosen at his side; and two smaller, foreign-looking men, with faces cast in rougher molds—Messrs. Komura and Takahira, representatives of victorious Japan.

### The Peace Prospects.

Whether it is to be peace or war, nobody can now say with certainty. All the lesser points have been settled, but the envoys are now face to face with the two main issues on which Russia declared there could be no compromise—the cession to Japan of Saghalien (or Sakhalin) Island, and the payment of Japan's war expenses. Perhaps Russia might yield one of these points, but her envoys give out the impression that to require her to yield both would be the death knell of peace. On the other hand, the Japanese declare that the terms of peace originally proposed are final. "We are not bluffers," says Mr. Sato, significantly.

Of course, it is a big bill which Russia has been called upon to pay. She could have prevented war by evacuating Manchuria two years ago; now the Manchurian evacuation is only one of a dozen big things she must do in order to save (what is left of) herself from further attack by the Japanese. The little bill for a billion dollars which the Japanese courteously ask her to pay, is equivalent to about half the money now in circulation in the United States and to one-sixth of all the gold that has been mined since Columbus discovered America. Says the New York World:

"The sum that the Japs will get, if they do, will be equal to \$2 a head for every white inhabitant of the earth. It is a little short of the total coinage of the United States mints since they began to turn out money. It is three times the world's annual production of gold. It will amount to about \$75 for every member of the yellow race on earth. The population of North America is estimated at 100,000,000. If we had to pay it, we'd be assessed \$10 a head."

And yet this amount is just what Germany obtained from France as indemnity after the six months Franco-Prussian War of the 70's. War is an expensive game, and the victor must have his spoils. Should the peace conference fail, it is said that the dogs of war will be immediately unchained, and Oyama and Linevitch will again face each other in one of the most desperate and bloody conflicts of the war.

### The Yellow Fever Situation.

There have been to date more than one thousand cases of yellow fever in New Orleans, and about 200 deaths. One-sixth of the persons infected have died. Meanwhile, the campaign against the mosquito goes on, and citizens who fail to screen their cisterns or adopt other required precautionary measures, find themselves face to face with work-house sentences. There have been only a very few cases among the negroes.

Every day our newspapers give two or three columns each to news of this epidemic, and all this, of course, is well enough. The only point we have to make that in North Carolina alone many times as many people die every year from preventable cases of typhoid fever and consumption, and if we should wage a crusade against

these diseases with the same earnestness and intelligence as the health authorities in New Orleans are showing, the saving in human life and efficiency would be of incalculable value.

### Booker Washington's Folly.

In view of the uniformly good advice which Booker Washington has given his race regarding social equality pretensions and maintaining friendly relations with the whites, one is at a loss to understand the latest escapade of which he has been guilty. We refer, of course, to the affair at Saratoga Springs the other day when Washington was the guest of John Wanamaker at dinner and acted as escort for Wanamaker's daughter, Mrs. Barclay Warburton. It may be said that it is hard for Washington to refuse to eat with these Northern white people or to escort these Northern white women—who look on him as a curiosity, much as we would some prominent Indian leader, and do not understand that they are playing with powder: not as regards themselves, but as regards their brethren and sisters of the South who have the hard task of dealing fairly with an inferior race and yet maintaining at all hazards the purity of the Caucasian blood.

The people of the South wish to support Booker Washington. He has the right ideas about training black men. He lays emphasis on character and industry. He is discouraging the negro's meddling in politics. "But," to quote the Richmond Times-Dispatch—itsself a friend of the negro and of negro education, as we are—"it goes without saying that Southerners are not going to give aid and encouragement to the head of a negro school who teaches social equality, either by precept or example."

Booker Washington himself has sense enough, but his fool friends may yet ruin him, if he isn't careful.

### No Extra Session of Congress.

We notice with regret the announcement that President Roosevelt has abandoned his intention of calling an extra session of Congress to consider railway rate regulation and tariff revision. Other reasons, of course, are given—the inconvenience of it, and all that—but one can read between the lines that the President is not hopeful of getting his party to grant the relief the people ought to have. He has not, however, given up his fight. In his notable Chautauqua address two weeks ago, he called attention to a fact we have often emphasized—that the wealthy classes in America must submit to the curtailment of special privileges, or a furious radicalism will deny them mere justice. The men who stand for the popular reforms now before our people are the friends, and not the enemies, of all honestly-acquired wealth.

### Federal Control of Corporations.

But President Roosevelt did not stop with a mere academic discussion of this principle. He went further and declared in so many words for Federal control or supervision of all corporations doing inter-State business. He warned the great corporations that stubborn defiance of popular will would lead to more radical legislation than he favored, and concluded:

"Very many of these men seem to think that the alternative is simply between submitting to the mild kind of governmental control we advocate and the absolute freedom to do whatever they think best. They are greatly in error. Either they will have to submit to reasonable supervision and regulation by the National authorities, or else they will ultimately have to submit to governmental action of a far more drastic type. . . . The great corporations are themselves to blame if by their opposition to what is legal and just they foster the popular feeling which calls for such drastic action. . . .

"I believe that all corporations engaged in inter-State commerce should be under the supervision of the National Government. I do not believe in taking steps hastily or rashly, and it may

be that all that is necessary in the immediate future is to pass an inter-State commerce bill conferring upon some branch of the executive government the power of effective action to remedy the abuses in connection with railway transportation. But in the end, and in my judgment at a time not very far off, we shall have to, or at least we shall find that we ought to, take further action as regards all corporations doing inter-State business."

### The National Reciprocity Convention.

The National Reciprocity Convention held in Chicago last week was largely attended, and forced upon the attention of the public some problems of vital importance, especially to our agricultural classes. In a nutshell, the situation is just this: America has put such an unreasonably high tariff on manufactured products sent to us from all foreign countries that these countries are now beginning to retaliate by putting a tariff on our farm products. Germany, for example, as we mentioned a week or two ago, is raising the rate all farm products; for example, in cottonseed oil, her increase of 300 per cent in tariff rates will destroy this Southern export trade to that country. Wallace's Farmer, of Des Moines, Iowa, also comments on this proposed German tariff and concludes in words that deserve the attention of farmers everywhere:

"We will have to meet the same condition in Austro-Hungary or the dominions of Francis Joseph, where it is likely that a similar tariff will be adopted. Russia has already raised her duties on our exports from 50 to 100 per cent in retaliation for the countervailing duty imposed by the United States on sugar, and has now adopted a maximum tariff which increases these retaliatory rates and will soon check our export trade with that country.

"France has a maximum and minimum tariff, and our exports to that country have shown no increase except on a few limited articles on which she gave the United States reductions in duties; and as a result our exports in these limited lines have increased 46 per cent in the last five years. The same is true of Italy. Switzerland, which has always been a good customer, will shortly put in force a new tariff, under which we will have to pay maximum rate and lose that trade. And so it goes.

"A large section of our people seem to be afflicted with national big-head and imagine that the whole world has to come to them for food. Hence they have opposed bitterly the Cuban reciprocity treaty which President Roosevelt forced through an unwilling Senate under the crack of the whip. It may be interesting to know that since that reciprocity treaty has gone into operation our imports from Cuba have increased 33 per cent, our exports 80 per cent.

"Provision was made in the Dingley law for just such reciprocity treaties as are now proposed; and in advocating them we are simply advocating the policy of Blaine and McKinley, two as wise and far-seeing statesmen as America has ever produced. We can save ourselves from an immense loss and a period of hard times by following the counsel of these wise and far-seeing statesmen instead of the counsel of the corporations and trusts with which the tariff, man-made, seems to be as sacred as the Divinely-made ten commandments.

"It is high time for the farmer to wake up and tell his member of Congress what must be done, and what the consequences will be if it is not done. With the tariff as an academic or purely theoretical questions we have no concern. Discussion of that is pure wind-jamming, barren as the discussion of perpetual motion, or the question as to which has suffered the greatest wrong at the hand of the white man, the Indian or the African. We have now before us a concrete case, where we can begin to see what we will lose if we don't look after our own interests. It is time for the farmer to say: 'No more buzzard for me, but a little more turkey.'"

### A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK.

Unpretending mediocrity is good, and genius is glorious; but a weak flavor of genius in an essentially common person is detestable. It spoils the grand neutrality of a commonplace character, as the rinsings of an unwashed wine-glass spoil a draught of fair water.—From "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," by Oliver Wendell Holmes.